

## Inside This Issue:

An Optimist leader relays her personal Internet Safety success story

Clubs and Members celebrate big anniversaries with memorable tales

# HOTLINE

Optimist International's Leadership Publication

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## Optimists,

This year has been a time to "Promise Yourself ... for the Kids." With four months left, there are plenty of opportunities to improve your Club, District and Optimist International with more Club projects, better leadership skills and more service to kids.



Mark Shriver

**The success of this, or any, Optimist year depends on all of us.** It depends on the effort each of us makes to serve more children. This can be accomplished with more youth activities that engage more adults and children. As we expose more people to what we do for kids, more people will want to join us in our mission.

A great way to impact a large number of kids and address a relevant issue is the Internet Safety program. School districts all over have been receptive to the program, and children, parents and teachers need to be educated on this important subject! Parents and kids have a lot of questions, and your Club can provide the answers!

If you're on your way to the 2010 Convention, you'll find that it's a great place to hone those leadership skills, with a new slate of workshops to suit volunteers at all levels of the organization. Before you go, be sure to check out the suggested Convention schedules designed for a variety of Members, from the Convention newcomer to the seasoned veteran.

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## Denver: Reasons to Go

Why should Optimists head to the 2010 Convention? There are so many reasons, but here are just a few, in no particular order:

- Meeting up with old friends
- Making new friends
- Located in the heart of downtown Denver
- Keynote speaker Scott Ginsberg, "The Nametag Guy"
- Newly renovated hotel
- Great hotel rates
- Exercising your right to vote
- A bunch of Optimist-oriented vendors all in one place
- Plenty of fun to keep the kids and grandkids busy
- Training for a new office
- Receiving recognition for a job well done
- Great excuse for a road trip
- Cheering on your CCC duck for just 10 bucks
- Inspirational speeches by top Optimist leaders
- Boasting about a great Club project in the Bragger's Hall
- A fresh wave of workshops for all
- Entertainment at special functions, business sessions and more
- A short drive from the mountains

If Denver is calling your name, sign up at [www.optimist.org/convention](http://www.optimist.org/convention).

## Live from Convention!

Optimists who can't make it to the 2010 Convention don't have to miss out on all of the action. The Opening Ceremonies and the three Business Sessions will be streaming live on [www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org). Here are the dates and times of the sessions:

Opening Ceremonies – 7-9 p.m. Thursday, July 8

First Business Session – 9-10:30 a.m. Friday, July 9

Second Business Session – 9 a.m.-Noon Saturday, July 10

Third (Closing) Business Session – 2-4:30 p.m. Saturday, July 10

To watch the action, just go to the Optimist website and look for the link in the yellow bar on the left side of the screen.

## Internet Safety Reaches Far Beyond Cause at Hand

*The following personal account was written by Carolyn Sievers, Pacific Southeast Governor.*

I have a very special story to share with you on a presentation I recently made to my grandson's fourth-grade class giving a Faux Paw presentation:

There are approximately 30 students in his class and they were all very curious to know what Jeremy's grandmother was coming to class for. His teacher, of course, had prequalified the CD and was extremely helpful. I introduced myself and said that I was a member of Optimist International, a group that helps our young people, and then further explained that my grandchildren participated sometimes in events that I attend as a Governor such as an Easter Egg Hunt for young cancer patients, Tri-Star, etc.

After showing the CD to a very interested group of students, I asked what they learned from the movie. Several raised their hands and made comments about not giving your name, address and phone number to strangers. Then when I asked if there were any other questions, all of their hands went up at one time to join in. Many of them had stories to tell about how "my older sister got in trouble on the internet ... ." Although their teacher gave me extra time, as he also enjoyed their participation, I finally did call it to a close, and he said he would open the topic up again for further discussion with them that afternoon.

A few days later, my grandson said that one of the students in his class said that I was a hero. When Jeremy asked him why, his response was that I helped children with cancer. I had to ask that he take back the word that it is truly the children with cancer who are heroes in my eyes – certainly not me.

Bottom line to this story was that not only did the Faux Paw movie serve a wonderful purpose with the children, our Childhood Cancer program obviously touched a young person who has had some involvement, most likely in his immediate family, with cancer.

It was a totally rewarding experience for me.

## Optimists Strive for Summer Safety Online



### Internet Safety

The Optimist year may be drawing to a close but there is still plenty of time to participate in the

Internet Safety program. School is out and most youth find themselves with extra time on their hands. For many, this free time is spent in front of a computer, chatting or updating their Facebook or other social networking pages. This may seem like a perfectly safe activity since the youth are often in their own homes, possibly even with their parents nearby.

Optimist Members have become familiar with the numerous dangers that youth may encounter while online, such as having a private conversation with a stranger, posting personal information, viewing adult content or being subjected to cyber-bullying. If youth, parents and teachers are not educated about these dangers, they may not recognize the potential harm or how to avoid them.

The summer months provide Optimists unique opportunities to present the Internet Safety program. Approach a local summer camp and ask if your Club can make a presentation to the campers or the counselors. Consider approaching a seasonal sports league or asking the local library if time could be scheduled for a presentation. Every community has groups that meet only during the warm summer months, and all it takes is for one Optimist to "just ask!"

Summer is also the perfect time for Clubs to start planning their Internet Safety presentations for the upcoming school year. Schedule a meeting with the principal or teacher at a local school shortly after school is out. Make sure to explain the program, outline the benefits and request an opportunity to schedule a Faux Paw presentation for the youth and an Adult Education presentation for the teachers, counselors and school administrators. Don't forget to invite your new contact at the school to a Club meeting. Once they are introduced to the programs run by their local Club, they may encourage their students to participate in a variety of Optimist activities and your Club may have found a new Member!

Please don't forget to submit your Presenter and Attendee evaluation forms to Optimist International. If you have any questions about the Internet Safety program, please contact your District Internet Safety Chair or the Programs Department at (800) 500-8130 or via e-mail at [programs@optimist.org](mailto:programs@optimist.org).

## A Sweeping Effort



*President Mark Shriver tries his hand at curling during a visit to Regina, Saskatchewan, in April. Shriver was in town for the Optimist International Under-18 Curling Championship.*

*Continued from page 1*

What would an Optimist year be without striving to serve more kids? The easiest way to serve more kids is to strengthen our respective Clubs. To boost those Club numbers, the new “Recruit 4 Members and You’re Free” incentive is rewarding Clubs for doing just that. By the end of April, almost 70 Optimists had recruited at least four new Members to take advantage of the incentive. More than 220 additional Optimists were at least halfway to reaching this recruitment goal.

All of these efforts helped put Optimist International almost 300 Members ahead for the month of April, with the biggest growth coming out of North Carolina East, North Florida, Colorado–Wyoming, Georgia, Pacific Southeast, Quebec West and Maryland–South Delaware. Thanks to each of these Districts for soaring just a little bit higher!

With great effort from Members, Clubs and Districts, we have been able to take the organization in new directions this year, and we’re not done yet. Now is the time to push for a strong finish to make this year truly memorable in every way. Promise yourself ... for the kids!

Mark Shriver  
Optimist International President

## SUBMIT DISTRICT ORATORICAL AND CCDHH WINNERS

Clubs, Zones and Districts have all worked hard to sponsor contests to provide youth in their communities with the necessary funds to further their education. Make sure to turn in the District scholarship winners to the International Office by the contest deadline dates! This will ensure their scholarship is processed quickly and they will be able to redeem their funds as soon as they are needed.

The deadline to submit District Oratorical winners is June 15. The District Entry Form, Winner’s Information Form, a copy of the speech and the birth certificate should be submitted for each of the winners.

The District Chair for the Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing should submit the District Entry Form, Winner’s Information Form, a copy of the speech and an audiogram by June 15. The audiogram must have been conducted within 24 months of the date of the contest.

All materials must be submitted by the deadline in order for scholarships to be processed. If you have questions about the scholarships, contact the Programs Department at (800) 500-8130 or via e-mail at [programs@optimist.org](mailto:programs@optimist.org).

## CCC Duck Race to Move Mountains for Matching Grants

John Denver may have sung about a “Rocky Mountain High,” but the chorus that accompanies the 2010 Optimist International Convention is the sound of quacking. Members have the opportunity to show their support for the Childhood Cancer Campaign by purchasing a ticket for the annual duck race.

All the proceeds will go to fund CCC matching grants for both US/Caribbean and Canadian Clubs. Any Club conducting a CCC project will be eligible to apply for a matching grant. The money raised by ducks sold in your District may be used to fund a grant for your Club’s very own project – what a great incentive to participate!

Members can purchase a ticket for a rubber duck for only \$10 US/CN. Every Member can participate, even those who will not be attending Convention. All order forms must be submitted to Optimist International by June 14. Checks should be made payable to “OIF-CCC.” There is no limit to the number of ducks each person can buy.

The first three ducks across the finish line will win bragging rights and a cash prize for their ticket holders. The first-place duck wins its owner the grand prize of \$100 US. The second-place finisher receives \$50 US, and the third duck across the line gets \$25 US. Checks will be mailed after Convention.

If you would like to purchase your duck or ducks today, contact your District CCC Chair or Optimist International at (800) 500-8130 or [ccc@optimist.org](mailto:ccc@optimist.org) to obtain an order form. After the presale ends, ducks can be purchased in the House of Optimism at Convention during the normal hours of operation.

Don’t miss this opportunity to play a role in supporting Optimist programs to aid children dealing with cancer, their families and their caregivers. Show them that Optimists are willing to move mountains to “provide the care and find the cure.”



## Optimists Grant Hope for Children with Cancer



While the commitment of Optimists to “providing the care and finding the cure” for childhood cancer is matchless, Optimist International wants to help make the impact of CCC projects even greater.

An aspect of the CCC program was to generate and distribute funds for “matching grant” opportunities for Clubs and research. Both the US and Canadian CCC Advisory Panels have been established and are now accepting applications for matching grants. The Advisory Panels will be responsible for the distribution of matching grant funds to applying Clubs.

Clubs will need to fill out the Matching Grant application and submit it to the International Office in St. Louis. A detailed project budget and list of the Members of the Club’s Board of Directors must be included in the submission. Applications are available on the Optimist website, [www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org), or by calling the International Office.

The Optimist International Board of Directors has once again designated June as Optimist International Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. During the month of June, Clubs, Zones and Districts are asked to conduct projects designed to raise the public perception of children’s cancer and gain public support for our efforts to serve these children. This is a great time to schedule an event and apply for a matching grant through Optimist International.

If you have any questions concerning the matching grants program, please contact the Programs Department at (800) 500-8130, ext. 235, or via e-mail at [ccc@optimist.org](mailto:ccc@optimist.org).



## Fort Wayne Club Helps Dish Out History

The Optimist Club of Fort Wayne-Southside, Indiana, will soon begin to gear up for the city's annual Johnny Appleseed Festival, when 250,000 people from 42 states in the United States descend on the area for a weekend of history.

The Southside Club serves up 500 gallons of ham and beans as well as sweet corn bread throughout the event each September. They average about 5,000 customers each year, and last year they brought in \$25,000 to help fund their Club projects.

The festival takes its history seriously, and all vendors must dress in period attire with no modern conveniences.

Johnny Appleseed – known to Fort Wayne locals as John Chapman – owned many nurseries in Indiana and surrounding states and is buried in Fort Wayne.



UP-TO-THE-MINUTE  
OPTIMISM ON  
twitter

Top: Young volunteers from Help Them Hear put in a lot of time at the Optimist booth.  
Above: Taste-testers get into the festival spirit.

## The Optimist is Now Available Online



Optimists can now head to [www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org) to read the latest issue of *The Optimist*. The spring issue of *The Optimist* can be found in its entirety at [www.optimist.org/](http://www.optimist.org/) magazine and the summer issue will be available shortly. Optimists will continue to receive hard-copy editions as well.

Optimist International is now on Twitter for those who want updates as soon as they are announced.

For organization news, follow <http://twitter.com/optimistintl>. A link to this account can also be found via the “Social Networking” button at [www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org). Look for it in the yellow bar on the left side of the screen.

For a daily dose of Optimist Club projects making it into the news, follow <http://twitter.com/optimistclubs>. A link to these updates can also be found on the “Clubs in the News” page of the website.

Optimist Junior Golf has not been left out! For news about the Optimist Junior Golf program, follow <http://twitter.com/optimistgolf>. A link can also be found on each page of [golf.optimist.org](http://golf.optimist.org).

## Decades of Optimism



*Ohio Governor Judy Martinson helps fellow Club Member Helen Woodall celebrate being 97 years young, with almost 20 years as an Optimist! Woodall joined the Dayton-East Optimist Club in 1991 and attends meetings whenever she can find a ride.*

## Fort Worth Club Begins with a Bang

The Optimist Club of Fort Worth, Texas, recently celebrated its 75th anniversary by looking back at its ambitious beginning.

Started in the middle of the Great Depression, it took just a little over a month to form the Club of 55 Members in May 1935.

Just a few months later, several Members decided to travel to St. Louis, Missouri, to attend the International Convention. As the story goes, they made their Texan presence known by wearing Western attire and shooting blanks in their six-guns in the hotel. Their actions weren't for nothing – it was all done to attract attention and convince Convention delegates to accept the new Club's invitation to hold the following year's Convention in Fort Worth. The plan worked!

The 1936 Convention holds its place in Optimist history as the time when Life Membership was approved. Locally, the Fort Worth Club made \$800 from the 1936 Convention and used the funds to start its "Boys Work Activity." The program evolved into two Junior Optimist Clubs that competed in softball and volleyball.

In addition to a number of other community activities, the Club's presence in local youth sports remains today with teams for tackle football, soccer and softball in 12 elementary schools. The Club also involves approximately 300 inner city and minority youth in little league baseball and has an extensive student athlete scholarship program.

## Ventura-Sunrise Club Starts with Unlikely Combo

The Ventura-Sunrise Optimist Club of California celebrated its 50th anniversary in April by looking back to its first big project, which was definitely out of the ordinary.

The Club formed in 1960 and immediately took on sponsorship of another new group, a boys' choir/baseball team. The choir included boys ages 8 to 15. They would have rehearsal for about 45 minutes and then take a break for baseball practice when they started to get antsy. After practice, it was back to the choir lofts for more singing.

The group was popular with the media and kind to the ears as well. The choir performed in a three-county area, appeared on television shows and sang its way to Disneyland. The group eventually became the Optimist Boys Choir, and proceeds from annual music events went toward the choir, a Junior Optimist Club and baseball and basketball teams. The Ventura Club later went on to begin the Ventura Youth Baseball Association League.

Current Members had fun at the April celebration, digging into the Club's past and of course planning for the next 50 years!

## SHARE WITH OPTIMISTS

Do you have a Club story that needs to be shared? Let us know! Send stories to [communications@optimist.org](mailto:communications@optimist.org). Photos are welcome as well!

## Optimist Golf Honors Leaders of the Course and Classroom

Five junior golfers will head to this summer's Optimist International Junior Golf Championships as members of the 2010 Hugh Cranford All-Scholastic Team.

This year's scholar athletes include Michelle Chen of Plano, Texas; Kristen Helmsdoerfer of Westerville, Ohio; David E. Mills of Evansville, Indiana; Shane Stewart of Dublin, Ohio; and Peyton Vitter of New Orleans, Louisiana. Helmsdoerfer also received the "Bringing Out the Best in Kids" Community Service Award.

Each of the junior golfers has an impressive balance of skill on the course and high academic performance, not to mention extensive extracurricular and community service activities.



Michelle Chen is finishing her junior year at Plano West Senior High School with a cumulative 3.98 GPA. Chen was her golf team's captain this year, the most valuable player in 2008-2009 and named Texas Junior Golf Tour Player of the Year. She competed in the 2009 Optimist International Junior Golf Championships and 2009 Optimist International Tournament of Champions.



Kristen Helmsdoerfer is finishing her senior year at Olentangy Orange High School and plans to attend Ohio University in the fall. She was instrumental in starting the girls' golf team at her school and teaching newcomers to the sport. She competed in the 2009 Optimist International Junior Golf Championships. As recipient of this year's "Bringing Out the Best in Kids" Community Service Award, she has dedicated more than 100 hours to service throughout the past school year. She is involved in Interact Service Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Ohio Reads and her local Sunday school. She also helped raise more than \$1,000 each for a Mexican orphanage and efforts in Haiti.



David E. Mills is completing his senior year at Evansville North High School, where he is ranked first in a class of 318 students. Mills has maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA throughout high school and will attend Indiana University in the fall. He has played golf for his high school for four years and is an inductee into the school's Athletic Hall of Fame. Mills is ranked 114th by *Golfweek* and has a *Junior Golf Scoreboard* ranking of 140. He finished in the top 10 in the 2009 Optimist International Tournament of Champions and 2007 Optimist International Junior Golf Championships.



After graduating from Dublin Jerome High School at the top of his class of 275 students, Shane Stewart is heading to Penn State University this fall on a golf scholarship. Stewart has played varsity golf for three years and received the Team Sportsmanship Award in 2007. He finished tied for first in last summer's Optimist International Junior Golf Championships District Qualifier and went on to compete in the international event.



Peyton Vitter is heading into his senior year at Jesuit High School with a 4.83 GPA. His school's golf team captured the regional championship title in 2008 and 2009. He has taken second place in the Louisiana State Junior Amateur for the past two years. He also competed in the local Optimist International Junior Golf Championships District Qualifier in 2007 and 2009.

Members of the team will receive automatic exemptions into the 2010 Optimist International Junior Golf Championships July 27 through August 1 at PGA National Resort and Spa in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. In addition, members of the scholastic team will have their registration fee for the tournament waived. All of this year's honorees will also be recognized for their accomplishments at the tournament's opening ceremonies on July 28.

For more information visit [www.optimist.org/golf](http://www.optimist.org/golf).

## *Optimist International Ends Pursuit of 501(c)(3) Status*

Dear Optimists,

Recently, the Internal Revenue Service denied Optimist International's request for a change in tax-exempt status from 501 (c)(4) to 501 (c)(3). After appealing this decision once, the Optimist International Board of Directors has decided to end the pursuit of this change. The next step would have been to take the IRS to court to appeal the decision and incur additional legal fees. Although the benefits of the tax status change for Clubs and the organization as a whole would have been significant, the Board has determined that it would not be in the best interest of the organization to pursue continued legal action.

Optimist International has submitted thousands of documents to the IRS over the past six years and utilized the help of several individual Clubs in trying to convince the agency that we qualified for this advantageous tax status. In the end, however, the IRS ruled that a significant percentage of the activities of our Clubs were of a social nature and, therefore, disqualified us for the 501 (c)(3) status, which is given to charitable organizations.

The IRS, as part of the process, had mandated that all Clubs change their Club Bylaws to reflect 501 (c)(3) status even though it had not been granted. Now that the application has been denied all Clubs must immediately change their Bylaws back to 501 (c)(4) status. Clubs will also have to change their articles of incorporation accordingly. The Board apologizes for any inconvenience this pursuit may have caused Clubs.

In order to facilitate this change, Club officers can now find generic Standard Club Bylaws when they log in to their Club's information at [www.optimistleaders.org](http://www.optimistleaders.org). After logging in, click the "Club Bylaws" button just above the Club's list of Members. The necessary changes can be made by the Club President or Secretary and the new document submitted electronically to Optimist International. In addition, your Bylaws will be available to you online at any time. For those who would like a tutorial, one is available at [www.optimistleaders.org/onlinebylaws](http://www.optimistleaders.org/onlinebylaws).

Thanks go to all of the Clubs that assisted in this process by providing documentation and other assistance. While the ruling by the IRS prevents Clubs and Optimist International from realizing some definite benefits, the organization will continue to fulfill its mission: "By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in kids."

Optimistically,



Mark O. Shriver IV  
International President  
on behalf of the International Board of Directors